



NEWS RELEASE

Tennessee Regulatory Authority

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TRA Approves Natural Gas Stipulation To Aid Consumers During Winter Season

Nashville, Tennessee – In response to widespread predictions that consumers nationwide will pay considerably more this winter in home heating costs, the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) today approved a stipulation containing two consumer-friendly provisions put forth jointly by the State's largest regulated natural gas companies – Atmos Energy, Chattanooga Gas, and Nashville Gas.

The first provision allows customers of the respective utility companies to enter into an equal payment plan during the heating season. This same provision automatically enrolls consumers that are unable to pay their monthly bill in total into the equal payment plan. Under the equal payment plan, a customer's monthly payment amount will be determined by the respective utility's existing policies and will extend *only* to persons whose accounts with their utility are current as of November 7, 2005.

Traditionally, such plans, which may also be referred to as "budget billing plans," divide a customer's yearly energy bills into 12 equal monthly payments with an annual true-up and are based on a customer's historical usage data.

Also approved is a provision that prohibits the natural gas companies from disconnecting their customers if the temperature falls to 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below during any 24-hour period.

"In view of the forecasted outlook that consumers will pay significantly more this winter to heat their homes, the overall aim of the stipulation is to prevent consumers' natural gas service from being disconnected due to non-payment," said TRA Chairman Ron Jones.

The stipulations will be in effect from November 7, 2005 to March 31, 2006. For information about energy conservation and federal assistance programs, visit www.state.tn.us/tra.

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